

Statement from Rep. Honda on the Privilege of Serving as CAPAC Chairman for Seven Years – and Congratulating the New Chair Rep. Judy Chu

Washington, DC - Today, Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15), outgoing chairman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), made the following statement reflecting upon his 7-year chairmanship of CAPAC, and congratulating Rep. Judy Chu as the new chair:

"For the past seven years, and for over an unprecedented four congresses, I have had the privilege of serving as chairman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC).

I am so proud of the growth that Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities have experienced, and am so proud to have been a part of the legacy of this great caucus.

Since former **Secretary Norman Y. Mineta** founded the caucus in 1994, CAPAC has been addressing the needs of the AAPI community in all areas of American life. Today, the caucus boasts 30 Members of Congress, who are bicameral, multi-racial and multi-ethnic.

Each Congress, new AAPI Members of Congress are elected, and they make history each and every year. There are currently 12 AAPI Members of Congress, including our two Senators, **Senator Daniel Inouye and Senator Daniel Akaka**

. I have seen many Members of Congress make history during my tenure, and I am so proud to call the following trailblazers my colleagues:

- **Senator Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii**, as the President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate, is the highest ranking AAPI politician in American history
- **Joseph Anh Cao of New Orleans, LA**, the first Vietnamese American Member of Congress during the 111th Congress
- **Judy Chu of Los Angeles, CA**, the first Chinese American women elected to Congress
- **Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan**, the first Member to represent the Northern Mariana Islands; and most recently,
- **Rep. Hansen Clarke of Detroit, MI**, the first Bangladeshi American to serve in the US Congress.

I also want to congratulate **Rep. Colleen Hanabusa** from Hawaii who is also a new Member of CAPAC this year.

The success of the caucus in the past 7 years is also a testament to the strength of the community. CAPAC serves our community's need to have a united voice for the nation's over 16 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Through our collective efforts, we have been able to direct and bring focus to significant issues such as addressing AAPI disparities in education, by establishing the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions, and securing funding to support these AANAPISI programs.

We've worked with federal agencies to ensure language access for federal programs, as well as data collection on our many domestic priorities such as education, healthcare, housing, and small business.

We have worked to ensure that small businesses have what they need to keep growing our economy and creating jobs, as they are so important in AAPI communities.

We have continued the fight for comprehensive immigration reform on behalf of families, as we work to eliminate family immigration backlogs, and reunite LGBT couples and their families. We also passed the DREAM Act in the House of Representatives last Congress through a historic vote.

On healthcare, CAPAC along with the Congressional Black and Hispanic Caucuses were able to include provisions in the health care reform legislation that will help end health disparities, collect data on our communities and include the US Territories in our health care system. Together, we also fight to ensure linguistically and culturally appropriate care for our communities.

In the area of housing, CAPAC Members have ensured that AAPIs have access to housing and foreclosure counseling by supporting community outreach and language access, and successfully advocated for the Department of Housing and Urban Development to designate the first and only housing counseling intermediary that serves AAPI communities, namely the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development.

This work would not be possible without the joint efforts of policymakers, including my esteemed colleagues of Congressional Leadership and the Tri-Caucus. In April 2002, CAPAC, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Congressional Hispanic Caucuses formally met for the first time, officially forming the Congressional Tri-Caucus. Together, our three caucuses strengthen the voices of our respective underserved communities. Together, TriCaucus Members make up 37.3% of the House Democratic Caucus.

The Tri-Caucus together has supported anti-racial profiling legislation, and successfully pushed for the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act that was enacted in 2006. We successfully ensured that the reauthorization protected provisions that ensuring access to the ballot for language minorities.

For the past five years, I've also served as a Member of the Appropriations Committee. As an Appropriator, I coordinated the caucus's efforts to support funding for programs important to the AAPI community throughout all key domestic areas, and have worked to coordinate communications and strategy with other Tri-Caucus Appropriators. I also worked to demystify the appropriations process for the AAPI community through staff trainings and briefings.

Through the appropriations process, I was able to secure robust funding for the 2010 Census, including \$1 Billion as part of Recovery Act, to ensure that hard-to-count communities were not left out.

CAPAC also secured compensation for Filipino World War II veterans who fought under the American flag, who have been waiting decades for justice and for this recognition of their service.

This past year, we also made media diversity a priority and urged Comcast and NBC Universal to make significant commitments to invest in the AAPI community in the context of their merger. Because of CAPAC's work, Comcast and NBC Universal signed an MOU making such commitments to AAPI advocacy groups.

Today, CAPAC also has solid and deep relationships with congressional leaders. In 2006,

CAPAC, the Senate Democratic Policy and Steering Committee along with then-Majority Leader Pelosi, organized the first Democratic Asian and Pacific Islander American Leadership Summit. We have organized an annual summit with Democratic leadership every year thereafter. These events have led to greater visibility for the caucus, and have helped ensure that AAPIs have a seat at the table in Capitol Hill and beyond.

CAPAC has also effectively engaged with the Executive Branch. The caucus has met with the majority of members of President Obama's cabinet to discuss priorities important to AAPI communities. We successfully pushed for the establishment of the White House Initiative ("Initiative") on AAPIs under the Clinton Administration, fighting for reauthorization under the Bush Administration, collaborating on community hearings on small business, entrepreneurship and healthcare. More recently, the caucus successfully advocated for the re-establishment of the Initiative under the Obama Administration.

Throughout the past seven years, the caucus has also provided a vehicle through which new AAPI elected officials and the community could become engaged, and leverage their power. CAPAC has supported diversity of hundreds of appointments throughout the various Administrations, and of judicial nominations and confirmations. CAPAC along with the Black and Hispanic Caucuses successfully advocated for and advised on the creation of an official staff diversity program for staff in the House of Representatives.

To me, a more robust caucus has always meant a stronger community, and vice versa. It has been my honor to amplify the voices of AAPI communities here in Washington, DC.

CAPAC's advocacy work would not be possible without business and community leaders, grassroots organizations and advocates. Together, we have been able to make tremendous strides, as our solidarity has won us a seat at the bargaining table.

As chairman of the caucus, I have traveled to nearly 40 states and territories to ensure that the voices of AAPI communities around the country are heard. From The East to West Coasts, from Bangladeshi Americans in Kansas to Vietnamese American fishermen in the Gulf Coast, each of our communities have stories to tell, that need to be heard in Congress and throughout our federal government. In my travels, I have seen our communities becoming more and more sophisticated, actively engaged politically, and eager to participate. This progress in our communities that we have made together throughout the country makes me proud to have served as your chairman for the past 7 years.

I congratulate **Rep. Judy Chu** on her new role as chair of CAPAC. Stepping down as chairman, I have much faith in the leadership, commitment and effectiveness of our new chairwoman. She and her staff are ready to lead the caucus as we continue our work together to strengthen the voices of AAPI communities around the country.

Though I will not longer be chairman, I will remain an active and engaged member of the Caucus, and always a dedicated servant of the AAPI community.

I will continue my work as CAPAC's lead on immigration and as a former principal, school teacher and school board member, education reform and equity for all of our communities will continue to be a priority for me. I will also continue to provide guidance and assistance to the caucus as a Member of the Budget and Appropriations Committees, and as a Senior Democratic Whip.

Thank you for your engagement with our caucus during my chairmanship. I urge you to remain actively engaged members of the AAPI national community under Rep. Chu's leadership.

It has been a true honor to serve as your CAPAC chairman for seven years. I hope you continue to view my office as a resource."

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